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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

It's been a really rough week, and I'm not referring to the weather or a long work week - I wish that it were the case. Unfortunately, what I've been having to deal with since exactly a week ago is the sudden passing of my father. Although he was 91-years-young, he was in relatively good health. No, this was unexpected from what all that I know.

My sister and I managed to make and finalize the arrangements for his final resting place. It took a couple of days because we were not aware of any arrangements that my father may have made, other than a family plot already arranged years ago. Other than a few glitches, everything went as "well" as possible.

But, I have a message to convey this week as a result of this experience. We've all heard it over and over again throughout the years, and it bears repeating. If you have immediate family that is still living - whether it be parents, siblings, children or whomever - find out whether or not they have made plans for when the time comes. And just as important, have you and/or your spouse made your own final arrangements?

The reason that I bring this up is because while going through some of my father's paperwork, I discovered my parents' wills. And my mother died 11 years ago! Anyway, my father's will was done over 40 years ago! If there's an updated one, I haven't come across it yet. My gut feeling is that there isn't one more current. So, why does the age of this document have significance? The administrators of the will, as named within, pre-deceased my father. That means there is no Executor. That means that there are two means to execute the will and settle my father's estate: the three children will have to unanimously name an administrator, or if that can't occur, one will have to be determined by the courts.

This is where I am at the present time. I'm waiting for a "package" of documents and forms from the probate court to see exactly what needs to be done. This will not be an easy and short process. There will be expenses incurred, legal wranglings, and a lot of issues among family members. Most people think that their legal and moral responsibilities end once the family member has been buried; and that "someone else" will take care of "the paperwork". Doesn't work that way, most of the time.

Check with your parents, siblings, spouse - whomever you may have to play a role in final arrangements. Make sure everything is in order! No one wants to think about death, and plan for it as far as making arrangements for the estate to be settled. Don't wait until it's too late! And I'm telling you this and I'm only in the very beginning

Until next time...

->In This Week's Gaming Section - 'The Art of Video Games' To Launch Tour!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Admission to The Art of Video Games is free but a ticket is required and can be obtained online. The show kicks off with GameFest, three days of play and screenings including the original Tron, costume photo-ops and talks by video game pioneers Nolan Bushnell and Hideo Kojima, which will be available in the archives:

<http://americanart.si.edu/multimedia/webcasts>

The exhibition will travel to 10 US cities following Washington DC, including visits to Boca Raton Museum of Art, EMP Museum in Seattle, Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art in Tennessee, and the Frost Art Museum at FIU in Miami, Florida.

Website: <http://www.americanart.si.edu/taovg>

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Yahoo Board Battle May Begin Within The Next Week

A potentially nasty battle to reshape Yahoo's board of directors will begin within the next week unless the troubled Internet company submits to the demands of a major shareholder.

Third Point LLC, a hedge fund that owns a 5.8 percent stake in Yahoo, issued its ultimatum in a letter Wednesday to company CEO Scott Thompson.

The letter, released in a regulatory filing, comes a month after Third Point first announced that it wanted four seats on a Yahoo board already undergoing an overhaul.

The board currently consists of 11 directors, but Chairman Roy Bostock and three other members announced they will step down at Yahoo's annual meeting. The departures are part of an attempt to placate shareholders frustrated with a long-running financial funk that has depressed the company's stock price.

Third Point believes Yahoo would fare better if the hedge fund's representatives were in the boardroom. Third Point's proposed directors are: Daniel Loeb, the hedge fund's manager; former NBC Universal CEO Jeff Zucker; former MTV Networks executive Michael Wolf and turnaround specialist Harry Wilson.

In Wednesday's letter, Loeb told Thompson he was disappointed with Yahoo's "dismissive" attitude toward Third Point's candidates since the two men spoke in a Feb. 17 conversation.

"The board's stonewalling, apparent insouciance and decision not to engage with us in a serious manner, has left us no choice but to directly approach our fellow owners" in an attempt to get Third Point's slate elected as directors, Loeb wrote.

In a statement, Yahoo said its board's nominating committee is still considering "a wide range of highly qualified candidates" for its board. The company appointed two new directors, Alfred Amoroso and Maynard Webb, to its board last month.

"The committee has included Third Point's candidates in its thorough review process and will make its recommendations to the full board in due course," Yahoo said.

Unless Yahoo accepts Third Point's candidates on the board, Loeb pledged to begin his campaign within the next week. That could lead to a showdown that culminates at Yahoo's annual meeting, which is usually held in late June.

The mutiny would threaten to distract Thompson as he plots his turnaround strategy. Citing unnamed people, the technology blog All Things D recently reported Thompson is considering a tumultuous shake-up that could include thousands of job cuts.

Yahoo has only said it "is engaged in a process that will generate significant strategic change."

Given those plans Loeb urged Thompson to negotiate a truce. "You appear to have enough battles to fight already," Loeb wrote.

Estonia To Extradite Cyber Fraud Scam Suspect to U.S.

An Estonian charged in a massive worldwide cyber fraud scam will be extradited to the United States, the prosecutor's office in Tallinn said on Friday, to face court over the case which saw millions of computers infected with malicious software.

The Estonian government made its final decision on Thursday to extradite Anton Ivanov, 26. Five other Estonian suspects are currently appealing a court ruling backing their extradition.

"The government decision to extradite Ivanov yesterday was final and cannot be appealed and does not need parliamentary approval," Kadri Tammai, spokeswoman for the Estonian Prosecutor General's office, told Reuters.

"For Ivanov, it is now up to an agreement with the Estonian Justice Ministry and the FBI as to when the FBI will come and collect him," she added.

The six men were arrested in the Baltic state in November 2011. They were subsequently charged by U.S. authorities with using malicious software and rogue DNS servers to hijack millions of computers worldwide to redirect Internet searches toward their own online advertisements.

Another man living in Russia was charged in connection with the case and is still at large. Four of the Estonians also face local money laundering investigations.

U.S. authorities say the scope of the cyber fraud was remarkable and used malicious software or malware to infect about 4 million computers in 100 countries including the United States. The scam is thought to have netted the suspects over \$14 million.

The Manhattan U.S. Attorney's office, which is prosecuting the U.S. case declined comment on Estonia's extradition decision, as did the FBI.

Months after the men were arrested, experts are still scrubbing the malware from computers.

The Manhattan federal court judge overseeing the case, Lewis Kaplan, last month agreed to a request by prosecutors for additional time to help Internet providers remove the malware from machines on their networks.

The letter to the judge said tens of thousands of computers were still infected.

Prosecutors also said temporary servers, installed to replace the rogue Estonian ones, needed to remain online for a few more months, or else the remaining infected computers would not be able to access the web.

Installing the temporary servers at the time of the November take-down had insured the millions of infected computers would still be able to go online.

Security Experts Will Tip Consumers to Cyber Fraud

Internet security experts have set up a system to alert Americans when sensitive personal information such as social security numbers and online banking log-in credentials turn up in the hands of cyber fraudsters.

AllClear ID, an Austin, Texas-based company that provides identity theft protection, is offering the free service with help from the non-profit National Cyber-Forensics and Training Alliance.

The NCFTA collects information on identity theft cases from member organizations that include law enforcement agencies, big Internet retailers, banks and computer security companies.

NCFTA members will pass on information about fraud that they suspect, witness or prevent directly to potential victims who sign up for the service from AllClear ID.

Consumers can enroll in the service, which is available over the web as well as through an iPhone app, at www.AllClearID.com.

Chinese Microbloggers Bemoan Identity Disclosure Rule

Living in one of the world's most heavily censored societies, Wang Yong enjoys anonymously venting his daily frustrations, 140 characters at a time, via China's version of Twitter, but new government restrictions are making him think twice.

As of Friday, Beijing-based microbloggers were required to register on the Weibo platform using their real identities or face unspecified legal consequences, in a bid to curb what Communist officials call rumors, vulgarities and pornography.

Many users, however, say the restrictions are clearly aimed at muzzling the often scathing, raucous - and perhaps most significantly, anonymous -

online chatter in a country where the Internet offers a rare opportunity for open discussion.

"Definitely, I will not use Weibo if they need real names," said Wang, a 27-year-old government employee who said he loved being able to post his thoughts anonymously. "I don't want to be supervised because of my words."

Weibo, which means microblog in Chinese, is operated by several companies, the biggest of which is Sina.

Despite Premier Wen Jiabao's calls for greater political reforms, the ruling Communist Party has shown little sign of loosening its grip on power, or allowing public dissent.

Wen, who is due to hand over power next year, told his last news conference at China's annual parliamentary session that letting off steam via the Internet was "normal".

But as no other public forum offers people the same freedom of debate that microblogs do, operators deploy a host of measures to monitor content, blocking and removing comment deemed unacceptable, especially posts with a political slant.

Even with all the censorship, Weibo users are able to access vast amounts of information that they would never have been able to some three years ago, as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus and other similar services are blocked.

It is unclear how strictly the authorities will enforce the identification rules, which may also be introduced in other major cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou.

By midday on Friday, only 19 million out of more than 300 million users of Sina had registered their identities, and several microbloggers told Reuters they would not sign up.

"I'm sure I will not use it any longer," said Sheng Hui, a 28-year-old employee at a foreign bank. "Weibo, for me, is just a tool to blow off my anger and pressure. I won't be able to shout abuse in future."

Part of the appeal of microblogs stems from the failure of the state-run media, said He Weifang, a law professor at Peking University and a regular microblogger, who, like Premier Wen, understands the platforms' "safety valve" value.

"China's official media has done a very poor job of reporting criticisms of the government and exposing society's weaknesses, so a country like ours needs to rely on the informal media," He said. "Once the people can express their opinions online, they don't have to take to the streets."

On Thursday, one of the most talked about issues on Sina's microblogs was Bo Xilai, the ambitious Communist Party leadership contender who was sacked from his post as head of the inland city of Chongqing.

Zhang Ming, a politics professor at Beijing's Renmin University and a frequent microblogger, said the new rules were aimed to "limit microbloggers' ability to expose malpractice by the local governments and bring whistleblowers immediately under control".

American ISPs To Launch Massive Copyright Spying Scheme on July 12

If you download potentially copyrighted software, videos or music, your Internet service provider (ISP) has been watching, and they're coming for you.

Specifically, they're coming for you on Thursday, July 12.

That's the date when the nation's largest ISPs will all voluntarily implement a new anti-piracy plan that will engage network operators in the largest digital spying scheme in history, and see some users' bandwidth completely cut off until they sign an agreement saying they will not download copyrighted materials.

Word of the start date has been largely kept secret since ISPs announced their plans last June. The deal was brokered by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), and coordinated by the Obama Administration. The same groups have weighed in heavily on controversial Internet policies around the world, with similar facilitation by the Obama's Administration's State Department.

The July 12 date was revealed by the RIAA's CEO and top lobbyist, Cary Sherman, during a publishers' conference on Wednesday in New York, according to technology publication CNet.

The content industries call this scheme a "graduated response" plan, which will see Time Warner Cable, Cablevision, Comcast, Verizon, AT&T and others spying on users' Internet activities and watching for potential copyright infringement. Users who are "caught" infringing on a creator's protected work can then be interrupted with a notice that piracy is forbidden by law and carries penalties of up to \$150,000 per infringement, requiring the user to click through saying they understand the consequences before bandwidth is restored, and they could still be subject to copyright infringement lawsuits.

Participating ISPs have a range of options for dealing with customers who continue to pirate media, at that point: They can require that an alleged repeat offender undergo an educational course before their service is restored. They can utilize multiple warnings, restrict access to only certain major websites like Google, Facebook or a list of the top 200 sites going, reduce someone's bandwidth to practically nothing and even share information on repeat offenders with competing ISPs, effectively creating a sort of Internet blacklist - although publicly, none of the network operators have agreed to "terminate" a customer's service.

It is because of those reasons that the content industries believe this program achieves much more than what might have been possible in the realm of public policy, and the ISPs appear to agree. The voluntary scheme will be paid for mostly by the content industries, which will share some costs with the ISPs.

Not everyone sees it as a positive: The Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights advocacy group, argued that the "graduated response" scheme lacks transparency, and that copyright holders could wield the network operators like a blunt instrument in cases where their claims may not be entirely valid - which is the biggest problem with statutes codified by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. They also pressed for assurances

that claim reviews will be conducted by a neutral party, and suggested that users should be given some form of due process before their bandwidth is turned down or cut off entirely.

The EFF also took issue with the system of protest the program puts in place, which only gives users six predetermined "defenses" against a copyright claim. "And even the six enumerated defenses are incomplete," they complained. "For example, the public domain defense applies only if the work was created before 1923 - even though works created after 1923 can enter the public domain in a variety of ways."

A legislative effort that would have achieved some, but not all, of these ends was utterly destroyed by the Internet's first ever mass work stoppage late last year, which saw thousands of popular websites go dark in protest. (Disclosure: The Raw Story participated in that protest.)

It's not yet clear how the tech world will react to the ISPs siding with the content industries to do what the government simply could not.

'Non-Humans' Account for 51% of All Internet Traffic

By one study's measure, slightly more than half of all the Internet's traffic comes from computers not being used by fleshy humans that might actually purchase products.

That's according to study released today by Incapsula, an Internet security firm, begging the question: What exactly does Internet traffic from a "non-human" look like? Incapsula is here to explain: "hackers, spambots, scrapers and spies of sorts collecting proprietary business information and customer data from unsuspecting websites." "Hackers" (5 percent) refers to hacking software that visits site to swipe credit-card information or crash sites (think of the ubiquitous DDoS attacks). "Scrapers" (another 5 percent) refer to bots that copy content from other sites and post it on their own, to get search-engine traffic. Altogether, the robotic ne'er-do-wells cited above constitutes 31 percent of all web traffic. The other 20 percent is the search engines themselves, the Googles and Bings of the Interwebbed world, whose servers work 'round-the-clock to index the Internet for our browsing pleasure.

And sorry to scare you up there, advertisers. "The company says that typically, only 49 percent of a web site's visitors are actual humans and that the non-human traffic is mostly invisible because it is not shown by analytics software," reports ZDNet. Traffic numbers apparently are only slightly inflated by non-human hits. The comment sections, however, may be more affected: 2 percent of all Internet traffic is from comment spammers. Which is actually sort of gratifying for anyone who's had to deal with angry commenters: dismissing them as just cranky robots isn't the worst coping strategy.

Watch Out Facebook, Twitter. Here Comes Pinterest

Christina Gomez has carefully displayed her dream cribs, rockers and mobiles on Pinterest, the increasingly popular online bulletin board. Never mind that she doesn't have a baby.

"Ah, Pinterest - where I dress my unborn children and decorate my imaginary mansion," the San Antonio political consultant said - on Twitter - when asked about the website.

Gomez is addicted. And she's not alone. The social site where users can "pin" images and follow others' collections has surged in recent months to become the 16th most-visited site in the United States, according to the Web information company Alexa. That's a higher rank than CNN.com.

Pinterest CEO Ben Silbermann, who grew up in Iowa collecting bugs and stamps, said on Tuesday that his goal is to help people discover things that they didn't know they wanted. He said there are plenty of people trying to tell you what you want via billboards, catalogs or Internet ads.

"But no one has really made a lot of progress toward building a place you want to go every day to discover things that feel like they were hand-picked just for you, and that's what I can hope we can do," Silbermann told a packed ballroom at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Interactive conference in Austin.

The self-deprecating Silbermann, who has rarely spoken publicly about the site he co-founded in fall 2009, described having "catastrophically small numbers" at first. Nine months in, there were fewer than 10,000 people on it, he said. He sought feedback from early users, giving some his cell phone number. And he didn't quit.

Silbermann, who spoke repeatedly of wanting his site to be beautiful and display beautiful collections, said one goal of his was to create a service that offered timelessness in an era when people were obsessed with real-time sites like Twitter.

"If something is your favorite book, it's no less your favorite book 72 hours from now or a year from now or five years from now or 10 years from now," he said. "It still says something about who you were then and who you want other people to know you as."

For Gomez, who lives in a 900-square-foot home in Texas and is about to move to smaller digs in Washington, D.C., Pinterest allows her to collect things - like USB drives shaped like teddy bears - without taking up precious physical space.

Like other users, she has organized her pictures into boards with titles like "Sewing Projects," "Gift Ideas" and "For the new house. She has used it to post pictures of clothes she already owns and to learn to cook with a crock pot.

The growth of Pinterest has been fueled primarily by women, including those planning their weddings, said Robert Quigley, who teaches new media and multimedia at the University of Texas. The draw is the site's simplicity, he said.

"The rise of Pinterest has been absolutely incredible - it just came out of nowhere," Quigley said. "It's so visual, it's easy to use and simple - yet complex enough to allow you to organize the way you want."

Pinterest isn't only for women.

Guillaume Driscoll, 30, a design student at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, said he and his girlfriend both use the site. Before

he joined a few months ago, he was interested in clothes, but "not on a level of some of my lady friends." He's seen that change as he's pinned more clothes, like colorful socks and a grey cashmere sport coat from J. Crew.

"Now, I'm starting to think about it more. What is my style? What does my style say about me?" said Driscoll, who was visiting Austin for SXSW.

Silbermann said it makes sense for people to use Pinterest to explore topics that lifestyle magazines focus on - design, home decorating, cooking and fitness - but he's also seeing new uses like political satire (say, Mitt Romney's fake yacht collection). Museums are using Pinterest to post art collections. Some users are posting travel guides to cities.

"Every day, literally, we see at least one board where we just couldn't have imagined how people would use it and to me, that's really exciting," Silbermann said.

Rumor Says Google s Nexus Tablet on Its Way With A \$149 Price Tag

Apple fans are lined up the world over today to pick up the latest and greatest iPad tablet, but for Android users, there could be an interesting alternative on the horizon.

Rumors have been swirling that Google and Asus are preparing a tablet in Google s Nexus line of devices for some time. Now, new information from Android and Me claims the tab could be available as soon as May and be priced as low as \$149. That would make it one of the cheapest tablets on the market, and well below even the newly-discounted iPad 2, which is now on shelves for \$399.

While Google s Eric Schmidt previously said Google intended to "market a tablet of the highest quality," as Boy Genius Report notes, that may not mean the most technically capable. Instead, the Android and Me rumor focuses on a cheaper tablet more in line with Amazon s Kindle Fire, with a 7-inch screen and lacking the Tegra 3 processor that was originally in Asus MeMo tablet on which the Nexus was rumored to be based.

The rumor claims that Asus has scrapped the \$249 MeMo altogether in favor of the Nexus tab, and with the higher price tag goes a quad-core processor for the tablet. Instead, Android and Me says to expect a dual-core processor (which, to be fair, is what s available in the iPad 2) and speculates it could be Qualcomm s Snapdragon rather than Nvidia s Tegra 3. Android and Me cites an anonymous source it says are high in the Asus supply chain, and that person claims the tablet is "a done deal."

Without knowing too much of the greater details of Google s plan, the rumors of a smaller, less technically proficient but cheaper Google tablet are very interesting. Amazon has proven with the Kindle Fire that there s a low-price tablet market out there that is only just being exploited, and it was with that price tag that Amazon was able to grab the no. 2 sales position behind the iPad in the fourth quarter of 2011. But at the same time, Amazon sold a few million Kindle Fires during the period, while Apple moved 15.4 million iPads in the same period. And Amazon is selling Kindle Fires at a loss with the expectation of selling lots of content to tablet owners through its online retail portal, so one wonders what such a low price tag might cost Google.

Still, it seems the latest thinking on how to fight back against the iPad is to address markets Apple isn't, and that seems to be working for Amazon. Google could definitely be competitive against Amazon going toe-to-toe with its Android rival, and that might be more successful than attempting to go all David on Apple's Goliath. That does nothing to address the fact that Apple continues to tower over the rest of the tablet market, though. We'll have to wait and see how Google's game plan develops.

Radio's 'This American Life' Retracts Apple Story

The public radio program "This American Life" on Friday retracted a story about what a monologist said he found while investigating Apple operations in China, citing "numerous fabrications."

The show's Friday broadcast will detail inconsistencies in the highly popular Jan. 6 episode that was an excerpt from writer Mike Daisey's critically acclaimed one-man show "The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs," which currently is at the Public Theater in New York.

"We're retracting the story because we can't vouch for its truth," Ira Glass, host of "This American Life," said in a letter posted on the show's website. Spokeswoman Emily Condon said Glass wouldn't take calls for comment until after Friday's episode airs.

In his program, Daisey describes meeting workers who put in very long hours and were forced to do crippling, repetitive motions at factories that make Apple products in China.

But "This American Life" says Rob Schmitz, a China correspondent for the public radio show "Marketplace," located and interviewed Daisey's Chinese interpreter, who disputed much of the artist's claims.

"This American Life" said in its statement that staffers asked Daisey for his interpreter's contact information while fact-checking the story and he said the cellphone number he had for her didn't work anymore and he had no way to reach her.

"At that point, we should've killed the story," Glass said in the statement. "But other things Daisey told us about Apple's operations in China checked out, and we saw no reason to doubt him."

Daisey posted on his web site Friday that he stands by his work and that what he does is theater, not journalism.

"'This American Life' is essentially a journalistic - not a theatrical - enterprise, and as such it operates under a different set of rules and expectations. But this is my only regret," Daisey's letter said.

Apple has been rebutting Daisey's allegations for months, to little effect. An Apple spokeswoman declined comment Friday.

The original episode, "Mr. Daisey and the Apple Factory," has become the most popular podcast in the history of "This American Life" with nearly 890,000 downloads.

In his show, Daisey splices career milestones of Steve Jobs and the transformation of Apple from a David into a Goliath with more personal stories about his own connection to the computer maker.

He has said that when he saw four photos posted online taken by workers at a Chinese factory to test the iPhone but mistakenly not erased, he suddenly realized people, not robots, were putting the sleek devices together.

In interviews and on stage, Daisey has said he traveled to the Chinese industrial zone of Shenzhen and interviewed hundreds of workers from Foxconn Technology Group, the world's largest electronics contract manufacturer.

"I talk to people whose joints in their hands have disintegrated from working on the line, doing the same motion hundreds and hundreds of thousands of times. It's like carpal tunnel on a scale we can scarcely imagine," he said while performing the show in New York in October.

While the piece specifically targets Apple, most of what Daisey said he discovered is applicable to many high-tech manufacturers. Daisey has performed the new monologue for some 50,000 people from Seattle to Washington, D.C., and it is now at The Public Theater until Sunday. Daisey was expected to take the show on tour, but its future is now in doubt.

In a statement, The Public Theater said the show would be performed in New York as scheduled and stood by what it called "a powerful work of art."

"Mike is an artist, not a journalist," the statement said. "Nevertheless, we wish he had been more precise with us and our audiences about what was and wasn't his personal experience in the piece."

Farewell, Encyclopedia Britannica in Print

The set my parents owned was packed around all over the country, from one military base to another. Just how high the high shelf was in my childhood depended on how many volumes had to be stacked to reach.

One volume served as a hard surface for an entire summer as I desperately tried to perfect pencil-drawn people. Another was consulted when I first heard of leukemia and thought I might have contracted it. Another, still, helped me get the information needed for an essay on the Vietnam War. The school library had a set just like mine. So did most of my friends.

According to The Upshot, Encyclopedia Britannica has announced it will no longer offer its print edition once its current inventory is gone. The decision marks the end of a 244-year era in which seemingly everyone had their own heavy set. The world has turned to other sources of information now - mostly digital - and has left the need to consult the massive, hardbound encyclopedias behind.

Britannica has moved on as well. The printed volumes don't account for 1 percent of its sales anymore. Instead, it offers a \$70 a year subscription to its online version, which it plans to ramp up in the future as it faces competition from other companies' free services, and it is planning to offer social connections on the site.

In a way, the idea of never having to move a 129-pound, 32-volume set around or facing the potential of dropping one of those books on your toe is welcome. Never having to page through endless amounts of information just to find the one piece you're looking for isn't bad at all, nor is the irritation of realizing the volume that contains the information you need has been separated from the rest of the set.

But still, the end of the era brings nostalgia. It was a part of days gone by just as much as merry-go-rounds and console televisions. Farewell, big set of books. You served us well.

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